

What is claimed is:

1. A centralized management system for medical devices, comprising:
  - a network;
  - a central server coupled to the network and including at least one prescription system for prescribing at least one programmable parameter of a medical device based upon at least one characteristic of a patient; and
  - a medical device programmer coupled to the network and configured to communicate at least one characteristic of a patient to the central server via the network, to receive at least one programmable parameter from the central server via the network, and to program the medical device using the at least one programmable parameter.
2. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the network is a wide area network.
3. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the central server includes at least one expert prescription system.
4. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the central server includes a plurality of expert prescription systems, each defined by an expert to prescribe at least one parameter of a medical device based on at least one characteristic of a patient.
5. The centralized management system of claim 4, wherein at least one of the central server and medical device programmer is configured to allow a user to select one of the plurality of expert prescription systems for prescribing the at least one parameter.
6. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the central server includes at least one custom prescription system.

7. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the central server includes a plurality of custom prescription systems, each defined by a user to prescribe at least one parameter of a medical device based on at least one characteristic of a patient.

8. The centralized management system of claim 7, wherein at least one of the central server and medical device programmer is configured to allow a user to use only a custom prescription system defined by that user from among the custom prescription systems.

9. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the central server includes at least one expert prescription system and at least one custom prescription system, and at least one of the central server and the medical device programmer is configured to allow a user to select one of the expert and custom prescription systems.

10. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the medical device programmer is configured to program an implantable medical device.

11. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the medical device programmer includes an interface to receive signals from at least one user input device that represent at least one of the at least one characteristic of the patient.

12. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the medical device programmer includes an interface to receive signals from a patient monitoring system that represent at least one of the at least one characteristic of the patient.

13. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the medical device programmer includes an interface to receive signals from a patient records computer system that represent at least one of the at least one characteristic of the patient.

14. The centralized management system of claim 1, wherein the medical device programmer includes an interface to receive signals from the medical device that represent at least one of the at least one characteristic of the patient.
15. A central server for use in a centralized management system for medical devices, comprising:
  - a network interface for communicating with a medical device programmer over a network; and
  - at least one prescription system coupled to the network interface, each configured to receive at least one characteristic of a patient from the medical device programmer via the network, to prescribe at least one programmable parameter of a medical device based on the at least one characteristic of the patient, and to transmit the at least one prescribed programmable parameter to the medical device programmer via the network.
16. The central server of claim 15, wherein the network interface is configured for communicating over a wide area network.
17. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system includes at least one expert prescription system.
18. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system includes a plurality of expert prescription systems, each defined by an expert to prescribe at least one parameter of a medical device based on at least one characteristic of a patient.
19. The central server of claim 18, wherein one of the plurality of expert prescription systems is selectable by a user for prescribing the at least one parameter.

20. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system includes at least one custom prescription system.
21. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system includes a plurality of custom prescription systems, each defined by a user to prescribe at least one parameter of a medical device based on at least one characteristic of a patient.
22. The central server of claim 21, wherein only a custom prescription system defined by a user is employable by that user from among the custom prescription systems.
23. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system includes at least one expert prescription system and at least one custom prescription system, and one of the expert and custom prescription systems is selectable by a user.
24. The central server of claim 15, wherein the at least one prescription system is configured to prescribe at least one parameter of an implantable medical device.
25. A medical device programmer for use in a centralized management system for medical devices, comprising:
  - a network interface for communicating with a central server over a network;
  - a medical device interface for communicating with a medical device; and
  - a processor coupled to the network interface and the medical device interface, and configured to communicate at least one characteristic of a patient to the central server via the network, to receive at least one prescribed programmable parameter of the medical device from the central server via the network, and to program the medical device using the at least one prescribed programmable parameter via the medical device interface.

26. The medical device programmer of claim 25, wherein the network interface is for communicating with the central server over a wide area network.

27. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising an input device interface for receiving an input signal from a user that selects one of a plurality of expert prescription systems hosted by the central server to prescribe the at least one parameter.

28. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising an input device interface for receiving an input signal from a user that selects a user-defined custom prescription system hosted by the central server to prescribe the at least one parameter.

29. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising an input device interface for receiving an input signal from a user that selects one of an expert prescription system and a custom prescription system hosted by the central server.

30. The medical device programmer of claim 25, wherein the medical device interface is for communicating with an implantable medical device.

31. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising a user input device interface to receive signals from at least one user input device that represent at least one patient characteristic for communication to the central server.

32. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising a patient monitoring system interface to receive signals from a patient monitoring system that represent at least one patient characteristic for communication to the central server.

33. The medical device programmer of claim 25, further comprising a patient records computer system interface to receive signals from a patient records computer system that represent at least one patient characteristic for communication to the central server.
34. The medical device programmer of claim 25, wherein signals received from the medical device via the medical device interface represent at least one patient characteristic for communication to the central server.
35. A method of programming a programmable medical device, comprising:
  - determining at least one characteristic of a patient at a programmer;
  - communicating the at least one characteristic to a central server;
  - determining at least one programmable parameter for a medical device based on the at least one characteristic using a prescription system hosted by the central server;
  - communicating the at least one programmable parameter to the programmer; and
  - programming the medical device using the at least one programmable parameter.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one characteristic of the patient at the programmer includes receiving signals from a user input device.
37. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one characteristic of the patient at the programmer includes receiving signals from a patient monitoring system.
38. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one characteristic of the patient at the programmer includes receiving signals from a patient records system.
39. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one characteristic of the patient at the programmer includes receiving signals from the medical device.

40. The method of claim 35, wherein communicating the at least one characteristic to the central server and communicating the at least one programmable parameter to the programmer each includes communicating over a wide area network.

41. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one programmable parameter includes using an expert prescription system hosted by the central server.

42. The method of claim 35, wherein the central server hosts a plurality of expert prescription systems defined by a plurality of experts, further comprising querying the user to determine which of the expert prescription systems to use.

43. The method of claim 35, wherein determining the at least one programmable parameter includes using a custom prescription system hosted by the central server.

44. The method of claim 35, wherein the central server hosts a plurality of custom prescription systems, further comprising giving a user access to only a custom prescription system defined by that user from among the custom prescription systems.

45. The method of claim 35, wherein the central server hosts at least one expert prescription system and at least one custom prescription system, further comprising querying the user to determine which of the hosted prescription systems to use.

46. The method of claim 35, wherein the medical device is an implantable medical device.